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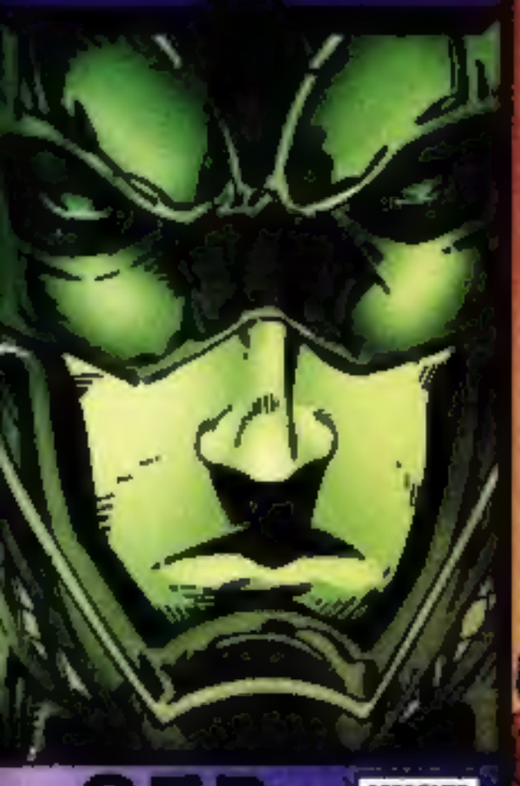

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LEE
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BOOTH
McWEENEY

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HARK THE HERALD...

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HE IS CALLED THE
SILVER SURFER

IMBUED WITH THE POWER COSMIC, HE CAN ALTER THE VERY FABRIC OF REALITY -- THEREBY BENDING SPACE AND TIME.

IT IS AN AWESOME POWER USED IN THE SERVICE OF HIS MASTER, GALACTUS.

AND LIKE THE OTHER HERALDS OF GALACTUS, THE SURFER HAD A LIFE OF HIS OWN BEFORE THE COSMIC TRANSFIGURATION AT THE HAND OF HIS MASTER.

ONCE, LONG AGO, HE WAS KNOWN SIMPLY AS NORRIN RADD.

A NOTED SCHOLAR OF THE PLANET ZENN-LA, HE SACRIFICED HIS OWN LIFE TO GALACTUS SO THAT HIS WORLD, AS WELL AS THE LIFE OF HIS BELOVED SHALLA BAL, WOULD BE SPARED.

WHILE HE WAS THE SAVIOR OF HIS OWN WORLD, THE SURFER SOON BECAME THE DREADED AND FEARED HARBINGER OF DOOM FOR COUNTLESS OTHER PLANETS THAT BECAME SUSTENANCE FOR GALACTUS.

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EMERGING FROM THE UNIVERSE'S OUTER DARKNESS, THE SURFER RACES TOWARD EARTH.

HE CAME HERE NOT TOO LONG AGO TO FIGHT ENTROPY. IT WAS NOW FOR HARMONY BY HIS REASON.

IT WAS AN ASSIGNMENT MUCH LIKE THE INFINITE OTHERS HE HAD CARRIED OUT BEFORE.

AND YET IN THE END, THIS PARTICULAR MISSION TURNED OUT VERY DIFFERENTLY.

FOR ON THIS PLANET, THE SURFER DISCOVERED KINDRED SOUL, ENDOWED WITH THE POWER COSMIC LIKE HIS OWN.

ALIEN BEINGS WHO WERE WILLING TO RISK THEIR OWN LIVES TO SAVE HIS.

BEINGS WHOM IN A PAST LIFE HE MIGHT NOW COME TO CALL FRIEND.

BUT FIRST HE MUST FIND THEM.

UTILIZING THE POWER COSMIC THE SURFER FOCUSES IN ON THEIR BIO-SIGNATURES AND QUICKLY LOCATES THEM.

AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGMENT AND ALLEGIANCE TO GALACTUS, THE SURFER IS COMPELLED TO AID THEM IN THEIR BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF UNNATURAL DESTRUCTION.

BUT EVEN AS HE RE-CONFIGURES HIS BOARD, THE SURFER WONDERS IF THERE IS ANYTHING HE CAN DO TO TRULY HELP THEM.

DOES HE HAVE ANY HOPE OF SAVING A WORLD THAT HAS BEEN MARKED FOR CONSUMPTION BY GALACTUS?

BY TRYING TO HELP HIS NEW-FOUND FRIENDS, IS HE BETRAYING HIS OWN MASTER?

THOUGH THE THOUGHT WEIGHS HEAVY UPON THE SURFER'S MIND, HE DECIDES THAT HE MUST DO WHAT HE CAN TO SAVE THIS PARTICULAR PLANET.

BUT EVEN AS HE MAKES HIS DESCENT, THE SURFER SENSES SOMETHING IS AMISS.

HE DETECTS THE PRESENCE OF OTHER BEINGS POSSESSING THE POWER COSMIC. THE SURFER KNOWS THIS CAN ONLY MEAN TROUBLE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

AND HE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT HE ISN'T ALREADY TOO LATE!

WOTTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT!

THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH OUT OF YOU, BEN GRIMM!

YOU PROMISED TO MODEL FOR ME AND I'M GOING TO HOLD YOU TO YOUR WORD.

BESIDES, THE PIECE IS GOING TO BE AUCTIONED FOR CHARITY. SO IT'S ALL FOR A GOOD CAUSE.

ALL RIGHT, ALREADY. I FEEL EMBARRASSED ENOUGH, ALICIA.

BUT WOULD IT BE ASKIN' TOO MUCH FER YA TA SCRATCH THE ITCH BEHIND MY EAR? IT'S DRIVIN' ME NUTS!

NOT AT ALL. IT'D BE MY PLEASURE.

ALL IN ALL, YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT SPORT ABOUT IT.

SOMETIMES... I WONDER WHAT YOU SEE IN ME.

MORE THAN YOU'RE WILLING TO ADMIT THAT'S THERE.

YEAH?

THIS IS JACK JOHNSON FOR WKBS CHANNEL 9, REPORTING TO YOU LIVE FROM CENTRAL PARK.

TODAY, THE WORLD OF SUPERHEROES MEETS THE WORLD OF ART AS REKNOWNED SCULPTRESS, ALICIA MASTERS, SPONSORS A CHARITY BENEFIT WITH HER FRIEND, BEN GRIMM.

GRIMM IS BETTER KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS THE *THING*, ONE OF THE CELEBRATED MEMBERS OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*.

ELSEWHERE IN THE PARK.

THE ANSWER IS HERE, SUE. I'M CERTAIN OF IT.

OUR PAST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE SILVER SURFER, THE MOLE MAN AND THE INHUMANS ARE INDIVIDUAL PIECES OF A LARGER PUZZLE. I JUST HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT ALL MEANS YET.

REED, YOU PROMISED ME THAT YOU'D LEAVE YOUR WORK BACK AT THE LABORATORY TODAY.

CAN'T WE SIMPLY ENJOY A BEAUTIFUL AFTERNOON TOGETHER?

Huh? OF COURSE, DARLING. PLEASE, FORGIVE ME.

IT'S JUST THAT I'VE HAD A LOT ON MY MIND LATELY.

BELIEVE ME, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE.

Oh? SO WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN THINKING ABOUT?

CHILDREN. REED... I...

...I'M *PREGNANT.*

WHA — WHAT?/ A BABY? BUT HOW —

I MEAN — I THOUGHT THE DOCTORS HAD SAID YOU COULDN'T —

THEY DID.

BUT SOMEHOW IT HAS.

A SHORT WHILE LATER.

THIS REALLY ISN'T NECESSARY, REED.

NONSENSE, DARLING. THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION.

DOESN'T IT? IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT JOHNNY.

HE HASN'T BEEN HIMSELF SINCE WE GOT BACK FROM ATTILAN.

I THINK HE'S STILL GETTING OVER *CRYSTAL*. HE TOOK IT PRETTY HARD, LEAVING HER BEHIND.

WOULD YOU MIND TERRIBLY IF I INVITED HIM TO DINNER WITH US?

NOT AT ALL. HE IS YOUR BROTHER AND THE COMPANY MIGHT DO HIM SOME GOOD.

THANK YOU, REED.

I'LL GIVE HIM A CALL AT THE BAXTER BUILDING.

WHAM!

JOHNNY? IT'S SUE. ARE YOU THERE?

WHAT'S UP, SIS?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE COMBAT SIMULATOR?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

REED AND I WERE WONDERING IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN US FOR DINNER.

WE HAVE SOME WONDERFUL NEWS THAT WE'D LIKE TO —

THANKS, BUT I THINK I'LL PASS.

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, I'M NOT FEELING VERY *SOCIAL* THESE DAYS.

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A WORK-OUT.

NOW WHAT WAS *THAT* ALL ABOUT?

AS HE MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE COMBAT EXERCISE, THE HUMAN TORCH FIGHTS LIKE A MAN POSSESSED.

IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, ONE WHO'S POSSESSED BY LOVE.

LEVEL SEVEN COMPLETE. REQUEST FURTHER --

INITIATE LEVEL EIGHT/

AFFIRMATIVE. LEVEL EIGHT COMMENCING.

AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, JOHNNY STORM IS TRYING HIS BEST TO EXORCISE THAT DEMON HIMSELF.

LEVEL NINE!

BUT TO ACCOMPLISH THAT, HE IS PUSHING HIMSELF TO THE VERY LIMITS OF HIS ABILITIES.

LEVEL TEN!

DANGER! DANGER!

OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS HAVE BEEN EXCEEDED!

SAFETY MECHANISMS UNABLE TO COMPENSATE!

Uh-Oh/ MAYBE THIS WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL/

AND JOHNNY STORM REALIZES, PERHAPS TOO LATE, THAT HE HAS GONE TOO FAR.

BUT THE YOUNG MAN'S INSTINCT FOR SURVIVAL KICKS IN WHERE HIS TRAINING LEFT OFF.

WHOOSH

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, HE UNLEASHES THE RAW POWER OF HIS NOVA BLAST! ITS EFFECT IS DEVASTATING AS IT VAPORIZES ANY AND ALL INCOMING ATTACKS.

MOMENTS LATER, THE COMBAT SIMULATOR'S FIRE EXTINGUISHERS COME ON-LINE AND KEEP THE REST OF THE BAXTER BUILDING FROM CATCHING FIRE.

WOW.

GUESS I WENT A LITTLE OVERBOARD WITH THAT ONE.

BUT AT LEAST I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER NOW.

I MEAN, WHY AM I FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF? I'M ONE OF THE MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELORS IN THE WORLD LIVING IN A CITY FILLED WITH THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD.

WHY AM I GETTING ALL WORKED UP OVER SOMEONE WHO'S LIVING LIKE A HERMIT HALFWAY ACROSS THE WORLD?

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M *IN LOVE* WITH HER...

AND THERE'S JUST NO GETTING AROUND THAT FACT.

-- HAVE JUST ARRIVED. SO, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO TELL ALL YOUR FANS OUT THERE, Ms. STORM?

EXCUSE ME?

Oh, NO. NOT RIGHT NOW.

GOOD LORD/ UP IN THE SKY/

WHA -- WHO IS THAT?

GREETINGS, EARTHLINGS/ I AM TERRAX THE TAMER/ HERALD OF GALACTUS/

I HAVE COME TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR MY MASTER/

ONE OF MY HERALD BRETHREN HAS INFORMED ME THAT THE THREE OF YOU POSSESS A SLIVER OF THE GREAT POWER COSMIC/ I SEE NOW THAT HE SPOKE THE TRUTH, FOR I SENSE ITS ENERGIES WITHIN YOU.

THAT MEANS YOU REPRESENT A POTENTIAL THREAT TO OUR MASTER'S PLAN. ONE THAT MUST BE ELIMINATED/

A HERALD OF GALACTUS? HERE? NOW?

EVERY-BODY/ STAND BACK/

BEN? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU AWAY FROM HERE, ALICIA. I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS ALIEN IS, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE MEANS BUSINESS.

WHAT'S CHROME-DOME'S BEEF WITH US, STRETCH? IF HE REALLY IS BUDDIES WITH THE *SILVER SURFER*, SHOULDN'T HE BE THANKIN' US AND CALLIN' US FRIENDS?

Hah/ THE SILVER SURFER IS THE ONE WHO SEALED YOUR FATE/

YOU SHALL ALL SOON BECOME FODDER FOR GALACTUS!

NOT IF I'VE GOT ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT.

SO WHY DON'T I START OFF BY KNOCKIN' YOU OFF YOUR LITTLE PEDESTAL/

CLUMSY OAF/

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR FEEBLE DISPLAY OF STRENGTH IS ANY MATCH AGAINST THE UNBRIDLED MIGHT OF MY COSMIC AX?

KRASH

AAARRGGH!

IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE I REDUCE YOUR STONY BODY TO A PILE OF SAND/

NOT AGAIN --

KRAANNGH

KLUNNGH!

PATOOT!

KRAASH!

ALL RIGHT...

...NOW THAT...

...HURT/

THEN I'LL SPARE YOU ANY FURTHER PAIN AND SUFFERING WITH A SWIFT AND FINAL DEATH-BLOW/

HUH? WHA -- WHAT'S GOIN' ON?!

GOOD WORK, SUE/ YOUR FORCE-FIELD HELD UP AGAINST TERRAX'S BLAST/

NOW IT'S TIME WE TURNED OUR ATTENTION ON OUR UNINVITED ALIEN.

WHO DARES?!

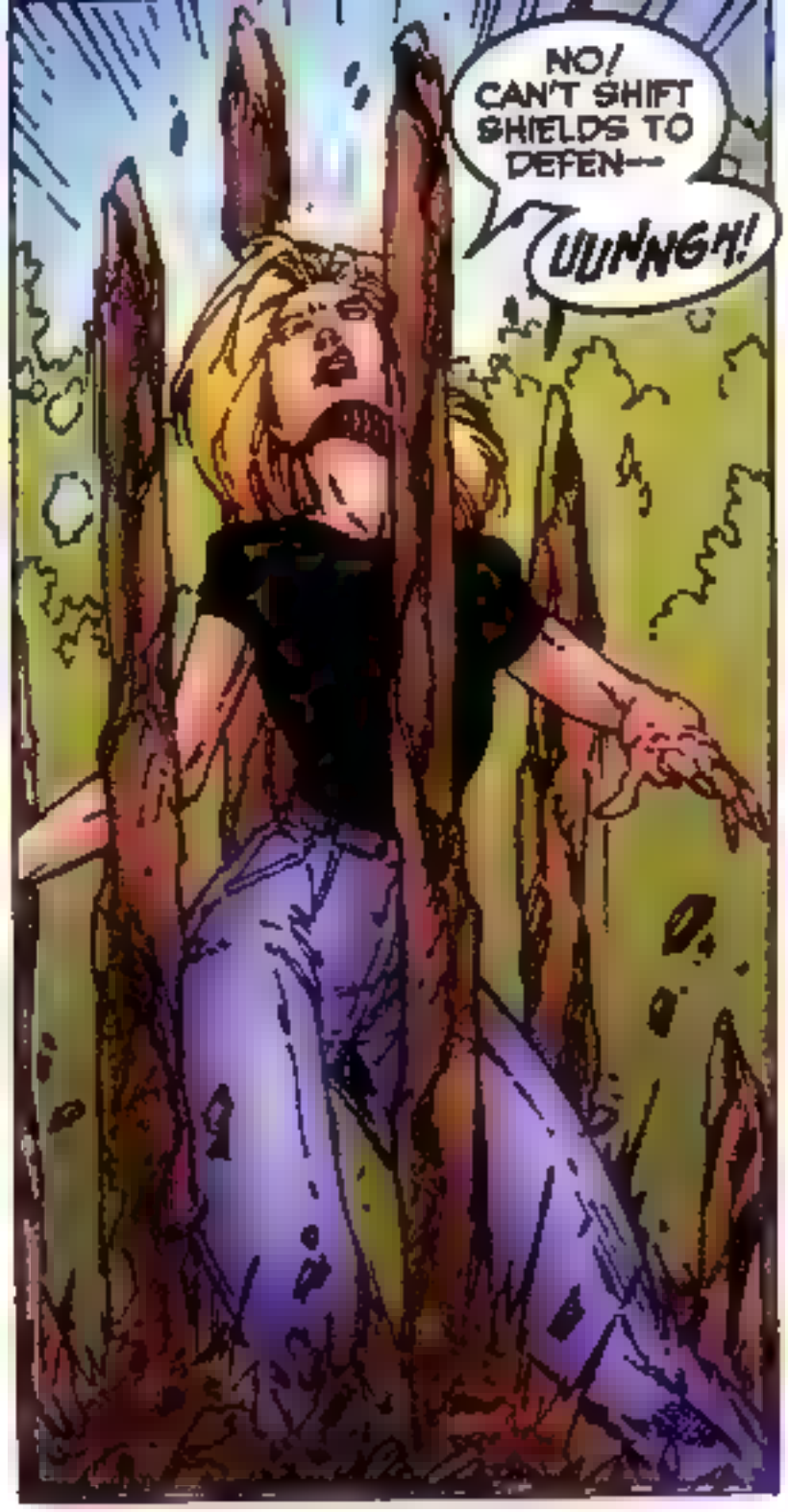
A CHALLENGE? BOLD WORDS, HUMAN FEMALE.

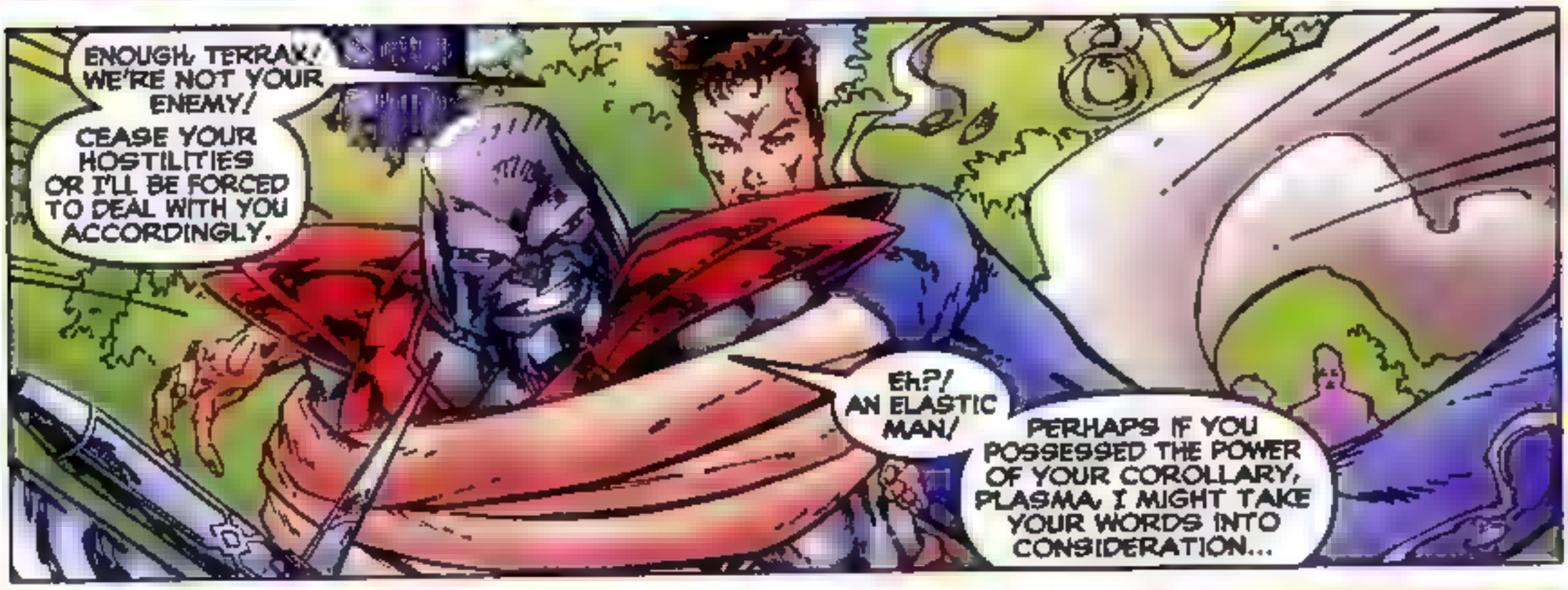
BUT I'M AFRAID THAT THEY SHALL BE YOUR LAST/

CRASH

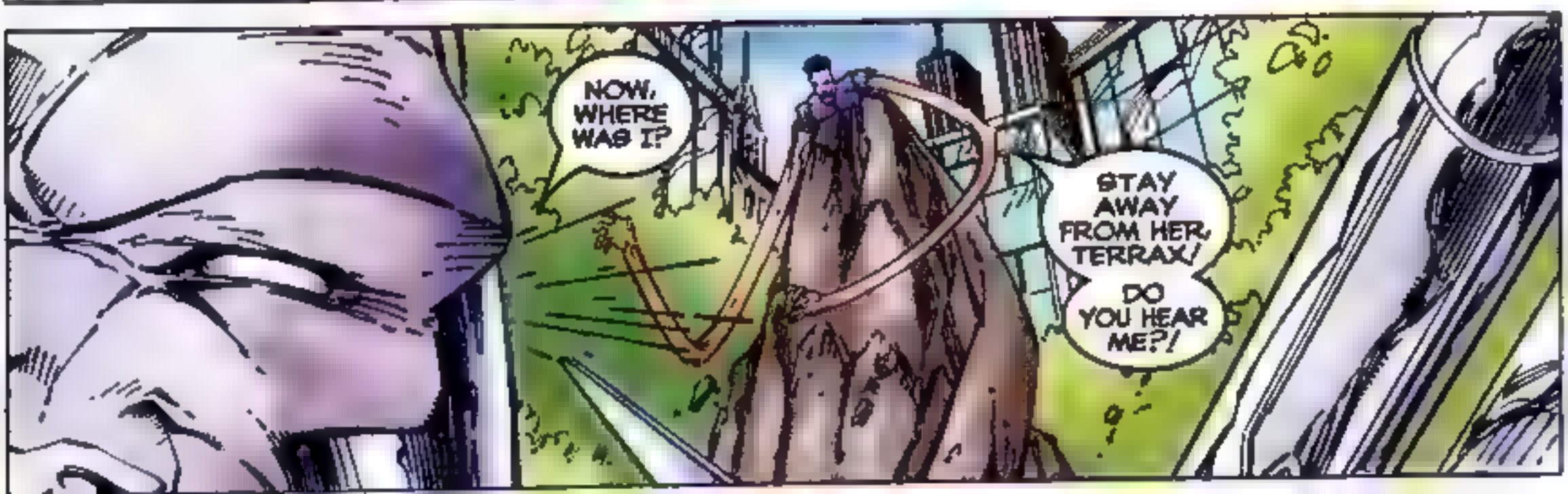
CRASH
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO A LOT MORE THAN THAT, TERRAX, IF YOU INTEND TO DEFEAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

YOU'RE QUITE RESOURCEFUL! BUT I AM NOT WITHOUT SURPRISES OF MY OWN!
FOR YOU SEE, THE POWER COSMIC GIVES ME MASTERY TO MANIPULATE...
...ALL THINGS OF THE EARTH!


NO! CAN'T SHIFT SHIELDS TO DEFEN--
UUNGH!


ENOUGH, TERRAX! WE'RE NOT YOUR ENEMY!
CEASE YOUR HOSTILITIES OR I'LL BE FORCED TO DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDINGLY.
EH?! AN ELASTIC MAN!
PERHAPS IF YOU POSSESSED THE POWER OF YOUR COROLLARY, PLASMA, I MIGHT TAKE YOUR WORDS INTO CONSIDERATION...

SKRAAAASH
...BUT SINCE YOUR POWERS ARE A MERE SHADOW OF HER'S, YOUR THREATS MEAN NOTHING TO ME!
HUUNGH!


NOW, WHERE WAS I?
STAY AWAY FROM HER, TERRAX!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!

Ah/ YES. THERE SHE IS.

JOHNNY/ CAN YOU HEAR ME?/ IT'S SUE/ THIS IS A PRIORITY DISTRESS CALL/ WE NEED YOUR HELP/ NOW/

CALLING FOR HELP?

I'M AFRAID THAT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD.

OH/

"IN FACT, NO ONE CAN SAVE YOU NOW/"

AW NO/ NOT THIS MOVIE AGAIN/

BEEP BEEP BEEP

A HUNDRED AND THIRTY CHANNELS TO SURF AND NOTHING WORTH WATCHING ON ANY OF THEM.

Ross

KLIK KLIK KLIK

JUST AS WELL, I SUPPOSE.

THE ONLY THING I REALLY WANT TO LOOK AT IS THIS PICTURE OF A WOMAN WHO'S HALF A WORLD AWAY.

MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

GALACTUS' STAR SPHERE EMERGES FROM AN INTERSTELLAR WORMHOLE AFTER A JOURNEY HALFWAY ACROSS THE UNIVERSE.

IT QUICKLY WINDS ITS WAY PAST THE OUTER PLANETS ON A DIRECT COURSE...

... FOR EARTH!

WITHIN THE PROTECTIVE COCOON OF HIS STAR SPHERE, GALACTUS RESTS IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN HIS EVER-DWINDLING ENERGY SUPPLY.

BUT AS THE STAR SPHERE APPROACHES ITS FINAL DESTINATION, THE TIME COMES...

ZZZZZZZZMMMMMMMMM

... FOR GALACTUS TO AWAKEN!

HIS PRIZE SO NEAR AT HAND.

AS THE STAR SPHERE SETTLES INTO GEO-NCHRONOUS ORBIT, GALACTUS SURVEYS THE WORLD BELOW HIM.

HE ASSIMILATING THE DELUGE OF INCOMING DATA CONCERNING THE BIO-SPHERIC ENERGY IT'S COMPOSITION OF THE PLANET COMPILED AND TRANSMITTED BY CATALYST PODS DEPOSITED ON THE EARTH EONS AGO.

AND AS THE FINAL MOMENT OF TRUTH APPROACHES, EVEN THE MIGHTY GALACTUS IS NERVOUS WITH ANTICIPATION.

YES. TERRA PRIME IS INDEED RIPE FOR HARVESTING.

THE LIFE-FORCE OF THIS WORLD IS BEYOND EVEN MY WILDEST EXPECTATIONS.

BUT IF I'M TO *LIVE*...

...IT MUST DIE!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

THE BATTLE RAGES ON AT THE VERY HEART OF CENTRAL PARK AS THREE OF THE FOUR MEMBERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...

WKBS

...FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES AGAINST THE ALIEN ASSAILANT NAMED TERRAX!

SO FAR THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HOLD THEIR OWN AND CONTAIN THE ALIEN WITHIN AN AREA OF THE PARK.

THOUGH IT NOW APPEARS THEIR EXTRATERRESTRIAL OPPONENT IS GAINING THE UPPER HAND IN THE BATTLE!

AND THE QUESTION ON EVERYBODY'S MIND AT THIS VERY MOMENT IS —

WHERE IS JOHNNY STORM?

HANG IN THERE GUYS!

THE HUMAN TORCH IS ON THE WAY!

"I JUST HOPE THAT I'M NOT ALREADY TOO LATE!"

C'MON, TERRAX! GUESS IT'S JUST YOU AND ME NOW!

BAH! YOU CAN BARELY STAND ON YOUR FEET!

I COULD EASILY DESTROY YOU WITH A SINGLE SWING OF MY AX.

BUT FIRST, I SHALL DISPOSE OF YOUR FEMALE COMRADE!

I SENSE A GROWING SOURCE OF POWER WITHIN HER!

NO! IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS!

BUT IT SHALL!

THEN YOU'RE IN FOR A MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT, TERRAX!

SORRY, BUDDY!

BUT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SETTLE FOR THE HUMAN TORCH!

AS FOR KILLING MY FRIENDS, YOU'D BETTER THINK THAT ONE OVER AGAIN!

A BLAST OF FLAME?!

FIRELORD?!

IMPUDENT WHELP/

YOUR BRAVADO IS ONLY MATCHED BY YOUR STUPIDITY/

YOU'RE ABOUT TO DISCOVER THAT THERE IS NO POWER ON THIS PLANET THAT WILL SAVE YOU FROM MY WRATH/

WHATEVER.

YOU OKAY, BEN?

JUST CATCHIN' MY BREATH, KID.

NOW GO GET HIM! AND WATCH YER-SELF!

YES, THAT'S IT/ DO YOUR WORST/

BUT KNOW THAT IN THE END, YOU SHALL SUFFER THE SAME UNFORTUNATE FATE AS YOUR FRIENDS/

YOU'RE MESSING WITH THE WRONG GUY ON THE WRONG DAY, BUDDY/

I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL DAY TO CUT LOOSE AND VENT SOME OF MY FRUSTRATION/

KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, CHROME-DOME?

IT MEANS, YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE *TOAST*/

HEY?/ WHAT GIVES?

SIMPLE CHILD'S PLAY.

FIRST, I SHALL USE MY POWERS TO EXTINGUISH YOUR FLAMES...

... AND THEN YOUR *LIFE*!

THAT JUST *AIN'T* GONNA HAPPEN!

'CAUSE YA SEE -- -- IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

WHAM

YOUP! IMPOSS!--

AARRGH!

AND I'M HERE TA COLLECT SOME PAYBACK!

KRASH

WOULDYA LOOK AT THAT. DON'T EVEN KNOW MY OWN STRENGTH!

WHADDYA THINK HE'S DOIN' NOW?

CLOSE TO ESCAPE VELOCITY.

WHOA, BEN! YOU OKAY?!

HUNGH! THAT MUSTA TOOK MORE OUTTA ME THAN I THOUGHT.

C'MON, WE GOTTA GO FIND SUZIE AND REED.

YOU TAKE IT EASY. I'LL GO AND SEE --

JUST GIVE ME A HAND. I CAN MAKE IT.

THERE'S STRETCH!

REED, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I -- I'LL BE FINE. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO TERRAX?

BEN PUT THE BIG BEAT-DOWN ON HIM.

IT'LL TAKE HIM AT LEAST A DAY TO DIG HIMSELF OUT OF THE HOLE HE'S BURIED IN.

GOOD WORK, YOU TWO.

NOW OUR PRIORITY IS FINDING SUE!

THERE SHE IS!

SHE APPEARS TO BE UNCONSCIOUS!

I'M SURE SUZIE'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

IT'S THE BABY THAT I'M CONCERNED ABOUT AT THE MOMENT.

BABY?! SUZIE'S PREGNANT?!

UH-OH! I'VE GOT ANOTHER SURPRISE FOR YOU, BEN!

"IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT MORE UNINVITED COMPANY/"

I AM FIRELORD!

I AM PLASMA!

WE ARE THE HERALDS OF GALACTUS!

WE SEEK OUR BROTHER. ONE WHO IS KNOWN AS TERRAX.

RETURN HIM TO OUR CUSTODY AT ONCE OR FACE THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES.

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE THEY'D LET US CATCH OUR BREATH FIRST, DO YOU?

THE WAY OUR LUCK'S BEEN TODAY, I REALLY DON'T THINK IT'D BE MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE, JOHNNY!

TO BE CONTINUED...